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Held at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 22 October 2001, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. Hasmy ..... (Malaysia)

Contents

Agenda item 86: International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space

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The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 86: International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space (A/56/20 and Corr.1, 306, 394)

1. **The Chairman** recalled various significant anniversaries in the history of space exploration, culminating in the largest scientific project ever attempted, with the participation of 16 nations, the International Space Station. Rather than being the potential source of conflict once feared, outer space had become a source of cooperation across political borders, making the permanent presence of humans in outer space a reality. The United Nations had played a pivotal role in promoting cooperation among nations to explore that final frontier; and the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and its Legal Subcommittee were continuing to do essential work in the progressive development of international space law.

2. **Mr. González** (Chairman, Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space), introducing the Committee's report (A/56/20 and Corr.1) and reviewing the work of the past year by the Committee and its subsidiary bodies, said that recent United Nations conferences had not sufficiently acknowledged the potential of space science and technology. The Committee had brought that situation to the attention of the Secretary-General and the General Assembly, in a letter circulated in document A/56/306, in the hope that other United Nations intergovernmental bodies would recognize space technology for the important tool it was. The challenge for the Committee was to establish a clear link between space benefits and the priority human development and security goals of the United Nations. It already provided a useful forum for the exchange of information on space applications and planned activities in space, but had to do more to actually bring space benefits to the people of developing countries.

3. The main areas in which the Committee had worked in the past year: were ways and means of maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes; implementation of the recommendations of the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III); the subjects assigned to the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and the Legal Subcommittee; spin-off benefits of space technology; and the proposed enlargement of the Committee's membership.

4. After surveying Member States to determine the order of priority in which they would classify the various recommendations in the Vienna Declaration on Space and Human Development adopted by UNISPACE III, the Committee had decided to set up 11 open-ended action teams corresponding to recommendations in priority areas that included disaster management, environmental monitoring strategy, management of Earth's resources, promotion of sustainable development, space-based navigation and positioning systems, capacity-building and increasing public awareness of the importance of space activities. Interested Member States acting as interim coordinators would lead the work associated with the recommendations concerned and each team was expected to submit a work plan for approval by the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee at its next session. Non-governmental organizations as well as United Nations agencies and other intergovernmental organizations were also being encouraged to participate. That very dynamic and flexible mechanism should yield tangible results by the year 2004, when the General Assembly would review and appraise the implementation of the outcome of UNISPACE III.

5. The Scientific and Technical Subcommittee had begun consideration of a new item entitled "Implementation of an integrated, space-based global natural disaster management system". Following the three-year work plan adopted in 2000, it had reviewed the types of natural disasters and the extent to which space-based services were being utilized to mitigate them. At its next session, the Subcommittee would review satellite and data distribution systems that could be used operationally for disaster management, and identify gaps in those systems.

6. Another new agenda item dealt with strengthening inter-agency cooperation and increasing the use of space applications and services by the United Nations system. The Subcommittee had analysed the degree to which space applications were currently being used and the degree to which the space applications could increase operational effectiveness, efficiency and coordination. In 2002, in conjunction with the Inter-Agency Meeting on Outer Space Activities, the Subcommittee would study the coordination of space-related activities within the United Nations system and the barriers to more

extensive use of them, and in general seek to make their use a United Nations priority. The Subcommittee had also considered a new item entitled "Government and private activities to promote education in space science and engineering".

7. In accordance with the Subcommittee's four-year work plan, the Working Group on the Use of Nuclear Power Sources in Outer Space had continued to prepare the scheduled report, based on reviews of national and international processes, proposals and standards.

8. On the issue of space debris, the Subcommittee had agreed on a work plan covering the period 2002-2004: it would hear proposals by the Inter-Agency Space Debris Coordination Committee (IADC) on debris mitigation, possibly endorsing them as guidelines to be voluntarily implemented by States, and would discuss impact hazards and shielding. At its 2001 session, the Subcommittee had already invited the Committee on Space Research (COSPAR) and the International Astronautical Federation (IAF) to organize a symposium on the theme "Terrestrial hazards from outer space objects and phenomena". COSPAR and IAF were being invited to arrange a 2002 symposium on the theme: "Remote sensing for water management in arid and semi-arid countries".

9. Following one of the UNISPACE III recommendations and as an effort to strengthen the partnership with industry, the Subcommittee had held its annual symposium, which in 2001 had dealt with emerging applications of global navigation satellite systems. The 2002 symposium would focus on very-high-resolution remote sensing and its impact on operational applications, as well as the space market situation. Two new items entitled "International cooperation in limiting obtrusive space advertising that could interfere with astronomical observations", and "Mobilization of financial resources to develop capacity in space science and technology applications", would be on the Subcommittee's agenda at its next session.

10. Highlights of the work of the Legal Subcommittee had included its discussion of a new agenda item entitled "Consideration of the draft convention of the International Institute for the Unification of Private Law (UNIDROIT) on international interests in mobile equipment and the preliminary draft protocol thereto on matters specific to space property", a timely issue because of the increased participation of private entities in space activities. The Subcommittee had begun consultations on the establishment of an ad hoc consultative mechanism to review the issues relating to that item, which would allow also for inter-sessional consultations with Member States; the first working meeting of the mechanism had been hosted by France.

11. On matters relating to the definition and delimitation of outer space and the character and utilization of the geostationary orbit, the Subcommittee's Working Group on the subject had met to consider only definition and delimitation issues. The Working Group had reviewed the concept of the "launching State" as set out in the Convention on International Liability for Damage Caused by Space Objects (the "Liability Convention") and the Convention on Registration of Objects Launched into Outer Space (the "Registration Convention"); and the following year it would review measures to promote wider implementation of the two Conventions. Although the agenda recommended by the Committee for the next session of the Legal Subcommittee did not include new items, it had been agreed that a working group should be established under the item entitled "Status and application of the five United Nations treaties on outer space", which would also study the promotion of space law, especially through the United Nations Programme on Space Applications.

12. The International Institute of Space Law and the European Centre for Space Law had organized a symposium for the Legal Subcommittee on methods of peaceful settlement of space law disputes; and they would again be invited to organize a symposium on space law at its 2002 session.

13. Turning to the issue of the membership of the Committee, he said that the Committee had decided that Cuba and Peru and the Republic of Korea and Malaysia, which had shared seats on a rotating basis, should become full members of the Committee and that Saudi Arabia and Slovakia should also become members of the Committee. It had also been agreed that no further expansion of the Committee's membership would be necessary for the next seven years, unless there were special circumstances. Furthermore, the Committee had agreed that each regional group should hold consultations among its members that were also members of the Committee for the purpose of encouraging them to participate in the work of the Committee and its two Subcommittees.

The regional groups would report to the Committee on the results of those consultations. The National Space Society, the European Association for the International Space Year (EURISY) and the Space Generation Advisory Council had also been granted permanent observer status.

14. At its next session, in response to the Vienna Declaration's call for action to increase awareness among decision makers and the general public of the importance of peaceful space activities in improving the common economic and social welfare of humanity, the Committee would include in its agenda a new item entitled "Space and society". The Committee had also agreed that a report on the activities of the International Satellite System for Search and Rescue (COSPAS-SARSAT) would be considered annually in the context of the review of the United Nations Programme on Space Applications, under the agenda item entitled "Report of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee".

15. The phenomena of globalization and technological revolution were combining to create a new age of networking. Unlike the industrial age, which had been structured around vertically integrated organizations with high costs of communications, information and transportation, the age of networking was structured around horizontal networks, with each organization focusing on competitive niches in order to obtain maximum political economic and financial advantage by making the right decisions at the right time. Some developing countries were tapping into those networks, with significant benefits for human development, but countries without the ability, knowledge and resources to take appropriate and timely action were much less likely to survive in a rapidly changing world and were becoming increasingly vulnerable to sudden changes in the pattern of trade, finance and investment. Scientific and technical cooperation, in particular with regard to space, was therefore all the more essential. In the networking age, all nations must have the ability to adopt global technologies to local needs, in order to survive. Policy, not charity, would determine whether new technologies became a tool for human development, particularly for developing countries. New international initiatives based on international law and the fair use of global rules were needed to channel new technologies towards the most urgent needs of the world's poor people.

16. Space technology and its new applications would require new avenues for international cooperation in the changing international framework. International cooperation in space activities at all levels had expanded rapidly over the past decade and many countries were carrying out their space programmes in cooperation with other countries. The Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space would continue to strengthen and expand that cooperation to promote the practical use of space applications for social and economic development and thereby contribute to meeting the basic needs of individuals in developing countries.

17. **Ms. Cervi** (Belgium), speaking on behalf of the European Union, the associated countries Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia and Turkey and, in addition, Norway, welcomed the innovative and pragmatic manner in which the recommendations of UNISPACE III were being implemented but recalled that notwithstanding the large number of new projects and initiatives worldwide, more must be done so that the developing countries could take part in and benefit from technologies and advances linked to the exploration and peaceful use of space.

18. The Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space had made progress in dealing with concerns relating to space debris: the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee had prepared an ambitious plan of work which would lead to recommendations to the General Assembly in 2004. In 2002, the European Centre for Space Law would submit to the Legal Subcommittee the results of a study it intended to undertake on legal aspects relating to that issue. The European Union considered that the issue of space debris and the role of international law in that area should be added to the agenda of the Legal Subcommittee without delay.

19. The European Union's space policy was one of innovation, concentrating on applications of benefit to society, as exemplified by the European Space Agency's GALILEO programme, an autonomous civilian satellite navigation system which offered various services, including consumer applications. The Global Monitoring for Environment and Security (GMES) programme, launched in cooperation with the European Space Agency, was another important programme which should contribute to a better understanding of climate change and the destruction of

natural resources and to preventing and managing natural and industrial disasters. It provided backup for other European policies in areas such as agriculture and the environment and a consensus would be sought in order to launch that project at the European level.

20. Recalling that international law set strict limits on the use of outer space for military purposes, she said that the issue of ways and means of maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes should be studied in depth by all the bodies concerned within the context of their respective mandates. The Conference on Disarmament must be fully active in that matter.

21. The Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space must continue its efforts to strengthen the international basis for the exploration and peaceful uses of outer space, including the development of international space law and, where appropriate, international agreements on the various practical and peaceful applications of space science and technology; it should also continue to promote ratification of the United Nations treaties on outer space. The growing number of intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and private companies which were seeking to participate in the Committee's work confirmed that the Committee's efforts to give renewed impetus to its activities had been successful.

22. Space must be used in peace and for peace; the European Union would continue its efforts within the framework of international space cooperation and the competent bodies of the United Nations to implement the principles of international space law as well as the recommendations made in that area such as those formulated by UNISPACE III.

23. **Mr. González** (Chile), speaking on behalf of the States members of the Common Market of the Southern Cone (MERCOSUR) and the associated States Bolivia and Chile, said that outer space must be viewed as the common heritage of all peoples, and that it must be used rationally and peacefully for the collective benefit of both current and future generations. In that connection, he stressed the principle of inter-generational and intra-generational equity reflected in the norms of international space law, particularly the 1967 Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies. Space technology could be helpful in, inter alia, locating essential resources for economic and social development, predicting patterns of global climate change and monitoring disarmament treaties and the control of drug-trafficking, provided that truly accurate information was available and access to knowledge and education was more equitable. Despite progress in the development of space technology, however, a large percentage of the world's population did not enjoy its benefits and lacked a clear understanding of its potential.

24. Appropriate technologies to mitigate natural disasters must be developed. In that connection, MERCOSUR firmly supported the work of the expert group on an integrated, space-based global natural disaster management system and hoped that substantive progress would be achieved. The coordination of distance learning programmes by satellite would improve the educational level in isolated and rural areas and bring the world closer to the goal of achieving universal access to the "information society". Information obtained by satellite technology was also vital to protecting the environment and promoting sustainable development for all.

25. He emphasized the importance of General Assembly resolution 55/122 on international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space. International cooperation was the key to the development of space technology and would prevent the self-exclusion of a large number of States which were not sharing in the benefits of space-related technologies. Human security must extend to the inhabitants of the entire planet and also to future generations and the environment.

26. MERCOSUR attached great importance to the continuation of studies for the early implementation of the measures recommended by UNISPACE III, including the resolution entitled "The Space Millennium: Vienna Declaration on Space and Human Development". A working group of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space must be established at an early date in order to deal with that question, with the main objective of ensuring that the developing countries were able to take full advantage of the benefits of outer space. To that end, MERCOSUR and its associated States urged all States to cooperate fully with the Trust Fund for the United Nations Programme on Space Applications.

27. MERCOSUR looked forward to the Fourth Space Conference of the Americas, to be held in 2003 in

Colombia, and the preparatory meeting for the Conference, to be held in Chile in 2002, in accordance with paragraph 26 of General Assembly resolution 55/122. It welcomed the enlargement of the membership of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, which was consistent with the principle of geographic distribution and would enhance the work of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies, particularly the Legal Subcommittee. Since national Governments were the main actors in the regulation of international space activities, the Committee must remain a forum for the exchange of information among States, for the improvement of exchanges among space programme administrators and of the international legal framework for space activities, and for the establishment and/or strengthening of cooperation. The ultimate goal must be to integrate all States in space activities and ensure wide access to their benefits. For that reason, MERCOSUR strongly supported the revitalization of the activities of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies. He stressed the need to educate national policy makers on the application of space technology to sustainable economic development.

28. **Mr. Ri** Kyong Il (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) said that, three years after the adoption of the Vienna Declaration, no substantial achievements had been made; a few countries were trying to monopolize the exploration and uses of outer space while the developing countries were becoming further marginalized. In particular, the militarization of outer space was continuing.

29. The rights and activities of developing countries to explore outer space must be respected and their activities must not be curtailed or branded as "missile tests" by the more technologically advanced countries. On the fictitious pretext that his country posed a "missile threat", the United States of America was establishing a missile defence system which could well trigger an arms race in outer space. The Legal Subcommittee of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space should give serious attention to considering measures to control the militarization of outer space. He stressed that the missile programme of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea was peaceful in nature. The country had launched its first artificial satellite in August 1998 and would continue its exploration of outer space not only for its own economic development but also to improve technical cooperation and exchanges with other countries of the world.

30. **Mr. Shebani** (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) said that the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya attached great importance to the use of space-related technology for economic development, natural disaster mitigation and prevention through early warning, the prediction of climate change and the improvement of health services. Space technology was also vital in combating desertification. His delegation would welcome the implementation of an integrated space-based global natural disaster management system and an increase in cooperation between national and international space agencies. There was a pressing need to implement the measures outlined in General Assembly resolution 55/122.

31. The Libyan Arab Jamahiriya followed with interest the activities of the subcommittees of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. At UNISPACE III, it had presented a paper reflecting its interest in outer space, and it had established a Libyan Remote Sensing Centre, which participated in scientific and technical activities organized by regional and international institutions and cooperated with specialized institutions in other States.

32. His delegation hoped that developing countries would be given sufficient means to establish national space committees and institutes with the same capabilities as those of developed countries. He stressed the need to use outer space for peaceful purposes only and to halt the arms race therein, and for coordination between the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and the Disarmament Commission. His delegation believed that outer space was the common heritage of all humankind and should therefore be used for humanitarian purposes only and not to create tension and instability at the international level.

33. **Mr. Su** Wei (China) welcomed the progress made by the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and stressed the importance of its role in ensuring international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space. His delegation warned against the danger of increased militarization of outer space and, recalling General Assembly resolution 55/122 and the Vienna Declaration, urged the Committee to continue to promote on a priority basis concrete actions and

recommendations, including international legal instruments, to facilitate international cooperation.

34. His delegation welcomed the Committee's decision to implement the recommendations of UNISPACE III in stages and, to that end, to establish action teams which would report to the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee in 2002 on progress made; that approach would encourage greater participation on the part of Member States and allow for productive activity within existing resources.

35. His delegation welcomed the efforts of the International Institute for the Unification of Private Law (UNIDROIT) with regard to a draft convention on international interests in mobile equipment and the preliminary draft protocol thereto on matters specific to space property; given the growth in commercial use of outer space and the increasing role played by the private sector, further work was necessary to develop legal instruments and regulations to deal with matters such as financing, mortgages and guarantees. The Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and its Legal Subcommittee should play an important role in developing the legal framework for the exploration of outer space. The definition of an international regime governing the financing of guarantees relating to space property compatible with the draft convention on international interests in mobile equipment, as well as other treaties relating to outer space, would require close consultations and his delegation would continue to work with other delegations to resolve any problems and ensure a positive outcome.

The meeting rose at 4.25 p.m.